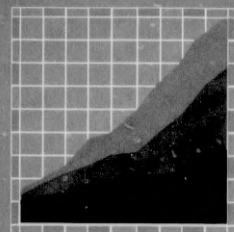


# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 7 May 1992

## *The week in statistics ...*

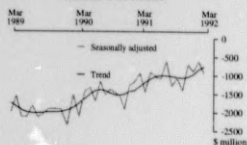
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statistics



**BALANCE OF PAYMENTS  
CURRENT ACCOUNT**



## Bigger March current account deficit mainly due to services and income

In seasonally adjusted terms, Australia's balance of payments current account deficit for March 1992 widened by \$313 million or 50 per cent on the previous month to \$938 million.

All current account aggregates except net unrequited transfers, contributed to this outcome.

At \$231 million, the surplus on goods and services was down \$158 million. This result was attributable to a smaller surplus in the balance on merchandise trade, which fell \$46 million to \$428 million (merchandise exports and imports rose 2 and 3 per cent respectively) and a higher net services deficit, up \$112 million to \$197 million.

The net income deficit rose 16 per cent to \$1,400 million.

The net unrequited transfers surplus rose 17 per cent to \$231 million.

**BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, CURRENT ACCOUNT**  
\$ million

	February 1992		March 1992	
	Original	Seasonally adjusted	Original	Seasonally adjusted
Balance on merchandise trade	655	474	363	428
Net services	145	-85	-113	-197
Balance on goods and services	800	389	250	231
Net income	-1,270	-1,212	-1,476	-1,400
Net unrequited transfers	206	198	204	231
Balance on current account	-264	-625	-1,022	-938

Details of the balance on merchandise trade in original terms are as follows:

Merchandise exports rose \$82 million, or 2 per cent, to \$4,712 million, thanks largely to strong performances by traditional rural exports. Total rural exports rose by \$140 million or 11 per cent, with notable increases in exports of:

- wool, up \$61 million or 20 per cent;
- meat, up \$54 million or 22 per cent; and
- cereals, up \$32 million or 14 per cent.

The only partly offsetting fall occurred in sugar, down \$17 million, or 38 per cent in the month.

Non-rural exports fell \$58 million or 2 per cent. The major falls were recorded in:

- coal, coke and briquettes, down \$93 million or 15 per cent;
- metal ores and minerals, down \$80 million or 12 per cent; and
- gold, down \$42 million or 11 per cent.

*Continued ...*



Increases were recorded in 'other' metals, up \$58 million or 15 per cent; transport equipment, up \$45 million or 31 per cent; machinery, up \$41 million or 14 per cent; and 'other' manufactures, up \$40 million or 9 per cent. Road vehicles made up about half of the increase in transport equipment exports.

Merchandise imports rose \$374 million or 9 per cent. The largest rises occurred in:

- ☐ machinery, up \$183 million or 17 per cent;
- ☐ 'other' manufactures, up \$90 million, or 10 per cent; and
- ☐ chemicals, up \$45 million or 10 per cent.

Partly offsetting falls were recorded only in fuels, down \$20 million or 8 per cent and 'other' transport equipment, down \$8 million or 10 per cent.

The current account deficit for the nine months ended March 1992 was \$9,281 million, down \$3,625 million or 28 per cent on the deficit for the nine months ended March 1991.

For further information, order the publication *Balance of Payments, Australia (5301.0)*, or contact Alan Puckeridge on (06) 252 6689 or Neil Batty on (06) 252 5540.

## CPI — Retail prices steady

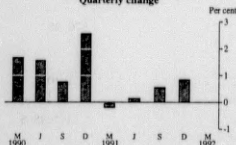
The consumer price index (CPI) recorded no movement between December quarter 1991 and March quarter 1992. This produced an annual increase (March quarter 1992 on March quarter 1991) of 1.7 per cent.

This quarter's result reflects a number of offsetting influences.

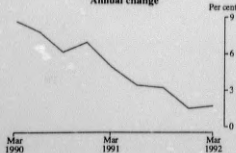
- ☐ Falls in housing (-2.3%), household equipment and operation (-0.3%), clothing (-0.2%), and recreation and education (-0.1%) were offset by increases in tobacco and alcohol (0.4%), food (0.6%), and health and personal care (4.7%). The transportation group recorded no change in the March quarter.
- ☐ Mortgage interest charges decreased by 5.5 per cent due to falls in interest rates; the cost of overseas travel and accommodation fell by 9.8 per cent due to reduced airfare and package holiday prices; furniture prices were down 2.3 per cent as a result of increased discounting; and petrol prices also fell by 1.3 per cent.
- ☐ Offsetting the falls were some significant increases in: hospital and medical services, up 7.6 per cent mainly due to the flow on effect of changes to Medicare rebates (introduced from 1 December 1991 and reversed from 1 March 1992); education fees (up 7.8%); pharmaceutical prices (up 8.0%); and entertainment charges (up 2.1%).

*Continued ...*

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX  
Quarterly change



CONSUMER PRICE INDEX  
Annual change





As the table below shows, health and personal care costs continue to stand out in both quarterly and annual movements.

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, MARCH QUARTER 1992**  
Weighted average of eight capital cities  
Percentage change

Group	From previous quarter	From corresponding quarter of previous year
Health and personal care	4.7	13.0
Tobacco and alcohol	0.4	4.8
Transportation	0.0	2.9
Household equipment and operation	-0.3	1.6
Food	0.6	1.3
Clothing	-0.2	1.3
Recreation and education	-0.1	1.2
Housing	-2.3	-4.8
All groups	0.0	1.7

For further information, order the publication Consumer Price Index (6401.0), or contact Maree Roy on (06) 252 6251.

## February import prices unchanged

The Import Price Index showed no change between January and February 1992.

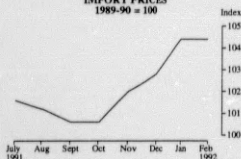
Price increases reported for a number of components including road vehicles and petroleum and petroleum products were offset by falls in other components such as machinery specialised for particular industries and other transport equipment.

The strengthening of the Australian dollar against the major trading currencies during February, reversing the falls in previous months, contributed to the generally small price movements in most components of the index.

**IMPORT PRICES**  
FEBRUARY 1992

Selected items	Percentage change from previous month
Mineral fuels, lubricants	2.1
Animal and vegetable oils	1.9
Machinery and transport equipment	0.1
Chemical products	-0.5
Miscellaneous manufactured articles	-0.5
Other commodities and transactions	-0.8
Crude materials	-1.0
All items	0.0

**IMPORT PRICES**  
1989-90 = 100



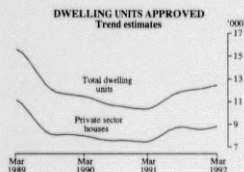


## Housing approvals back on track

The total number of dwelling units approved (seasonally adjusted) rose by 6.9 per cent in March 1992, the third increase in the last four months and offsetting a 7.4 per cent fall between January and February 1992. Private sector house approvals rose by 5.8 per cent, the third consecutive monthly increase. In original terms, the 13,409 dwelling units approved in March 1992 was the highest monthly figure since June 1989.

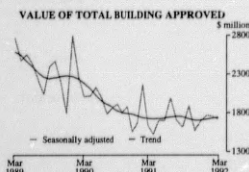
With building approvals data showing volatility on a month to month basis, the trend estimates are a better indicator of the underlying behaviour of the series. March 1992 approvals reinforced the steady growth which has seen the level of the trend series for total dwelling unit approvals rise by 20.0 per cent over the last twelve months.

The increase over the last three months in seasonally adjusted private sector houses approved has meant that the trend for that series has turned upwards from December 1991, following a brief period of decline between September and December 1991.



DWELLING UNITS APPROVED, MARCH 1992

	Number	Percentage change	
		From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Private sector houses —			
Original	9,607	16.8	38.6
Seasonally adjusted	9,281	5.8	27.4
Total dwelling units —			
Original	13,409	17.1	37.2
Seasonally adjusted	12,707	6.9	24.2



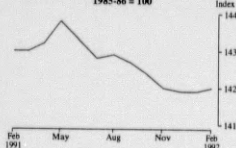
The trend estimates for the value of new residential building approved to March 1992, continue to display the gradual growth evident in the series since March 1991. The trend in the value of total building approved, although rising slowly to March, has been fluctuating in recent months. The longer term outlook for this series will depend on future non-residential building activity. The separate trend series for the value of non-residential building approved is available to December 1991 and was still declining to that point.

VALUE OF BUILDING APPROVED, MARCH 1992

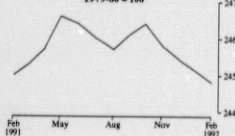
	\$ million	Percentage change	
		From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
New residential building —			
Original	1,076.4	17.3	30.3
Seasonally adjusted	1,015.1	6.1	17.9
Total building —			
Original	1,795.9	15.5	18.0
Seasonally adjusted	1,722.2	-1.6	5.2



PRICES OF HOUSE BUILDING MATERIALS  
1985-86 = 100



PRICES OF NON-DWELLING  
BUILDING MATERIALS  
1979-80 = 100



## Little change in prices of building materials

Prices of materials used in house building increased 0.1 per cent in February 1992, the first monthly increase recorded since August 1991. Builders' hardware and plaster were the main contributors to the increase.

Prices of materials used in other forms of building decreased by 0.1 per cent in February with ready mixed concrete the main contributor to the decrease.

Between February 1991 and February 1992 prices of materials used in house building decreased 0.7 per cent, while prices of materials used in other forms of building decreased by 0.1 per cent in the same period.

PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, FEBRUARY 1992  
Percentage change

City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	0.2	-0.5	0.0	1.3
Melbourne	-0.1	-1.9	-0.4	-2.7
Brisbane	0.5	1.5	0.2	2.5
Adelaide	-0.4	-1.8	-0.4	-0.4
Perth	-0.2	-0.2	-0.1	-0.8
Hobart	0.2	2.5	0.2	3.1
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.1	-0.7	-0.1	-0.1
Darwin	— Not available —		0.4	2.5
Canberra	-0.4	2.0	0.4	2.0

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0)* and *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities (6407.0)*, or contact Mark Dickson on (06) 252 6198.

## Personal finance in brief ...

Personal finance commitments for February 1992 totalled \$1,493.3 million, an increase of \$53.2 million (3.7%) over January 1992 and an increase of \$48.6 million (3.4%) over February 1991.

It should be noted that while February 1992 and February 1991 were both four week reporting periods for some banks, January 1992 was a five week reporting period.

Both components of personal finance recorded increases in February 1992. Total fixed loan commitments increased by \$23.9 million (2.4%), and total new and increased revolving credit facilities by \$29.4 million (6.5%).

Source: *Personal Finance, Australia, February 1992 (5642.0)*.



## Tourist accommodation: room occupancy rates increase

The December quarter 1991 was generally one of growth for accommodation in hotels, motels and guest houses in Australia.

The number of rooms available increased by 3.0 per cent compared with December quarter 1990, although small decreases were recorded in Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

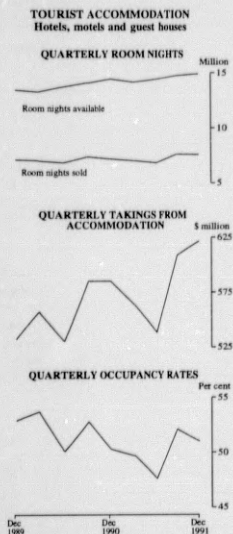
Room nights occupied increased at a higher rate (5.1%) during the year, thus boosting the room occupancy rate 0.7 percentage points to 51.0 per cent. This represented the first year-on-year increase in room occupancy rate since the Australian Bicentennial and World Expo year of 1988.

Since December quarter 1990, rooms available in four star hotels and motels increased significantly by 32.4 per cent, while room nights occupied for the same establishments increased by an even larger amount (34.5%).

Nationally, guest arrivals increased by 4.5 per cent over this period, with only South Australia and Northern Territory recording decreases. Average length of stay remained steady at 2.0 days.

Takings from accommodation increased by 6.2 per cent to \$621.4 million over the year to December 1991, while the average takings per room night sold rose from \$81 to \$82. During this same period, the Consumer Price Index increased by only 1.5 per cent.

Visitor hostels (backpacker establishments) for which collection of data has only recently commenced, recorded a bed occupancy rate of 42.9 per cent in December quarter 1991 and takings from accommodation of \$11.0 million. New South Wales (54.5%) and Queensland (48.1%) had the highest occupancy rates while these two States together accounted for about two-thirds of the takings from accommodation.



**TOURIST ACCOMMODATION**  
Hotels, motels and guest houses

	December quarter		Percentage change
	1990	1991	
Rooms available ('000)	157	162	3.0
Room nights occupied ('000)	7,204	7,571	5.1
Room occupancy rates (%)	50.3	51.0	n.a.
Guest arrivals ('000)	6,322	6,603	4.5
Average length of stay (days)	2.0	2.0	0.0
Takings from accommodation (\$m)	585	621	6.2



## Synopsis of articles, April 1992

2 April 1992

### Final average weekly earnings figure for November

Average weekly ordinary time earnings of full-time adults were \$578.80 in November 1991, up by 2.0 per cent from \$567.70 in August 1991.

### Fall in overtime and over-award pay

Overtime pay declined by 8.4 per cent in the twelve months to May 1991, with the manufacturing industry being the most affected.

### Vehicle registrations still climbing

The trend estimate for total new motor vehicle registrations for February 1992 rose by 2.2 per cent over January. The trend estimate has shown a constant monthly increase of 2.2 per cent since November 1991 after recording smaller increases in the previous two months.

### Manufacturing in February

The publication *Manufacturing Production, Australia, Preliminary (8301.0)* contains up-to-date time series data on the production of twenty-seven major indicators of production (twenty-five seasonally adjusted).

### Growth in housing approvals slows

The total number of dwelling units approved in February 1992 fell by 7.4 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms following two successive months of growth.

### Building material prices — annual rates continue to fall

The annual rate of change for prices of materials used in building fell in January 1992, continuing the general downward trend observed since late 1988 and surpassing the record low annual rates of recent months.

### Small fall in manufacturing material prices

The price index of materials used in manufacturing industries fell by 0.2 per cent between December 1991 and January 1992; prices of home produced materials fell by 0.8 per cent while imported materials increased by 0.6 per cent.

### Industrial disputes at 30-year low

In December 1991 there were 43 disputes reported in progress involving 7,700 employees with the loss of 10,400 working days. The number of disputes was the lowest recorded for a month since December 1961 (35) while the number of employees involved and working days lost was the lowest since January 1962 (5,200 and 9,100 respectively).

9 April 1992

### All main components help current account deficit fall in February

The seasonally adjusted deficit of Australia's balance of payments current account was \$667 million in February 1992, down \$237 million or more than 26 per cent on the previous month. All the main current account aggregates contributed to this outcome.

### Canberra tops housing price rises

Canberra's house prices are increasing at a higher rate than any of the other capital cities.

### Private sector lifts job vacancies

The estimated number of job vacancies continued the upturn of the previous quarter with an increase of 3.1 per cent to 26,600 (seasonally adjusted) in the three months to February 1992. Private sector vacancies in February 1992 were 19,100 in original terms — a rise of 16.8 per cent since November 1991.

### Import prices keep rising

The Import Price Index increased by 1.6 per cent in January 1992.

### Country classification revised

The Australian Standard Classification of Countries for Social Statistics (ASCCSS) has been revised to reflect recent political changes in the former USSR, the Baltic States, and the former Yugoslavian republics of Croatia and Slovenia.



9 April 1992 — continued

#### The Australian labour market — 1991 in review

The Australian labour market weakened considerably during 1991. Compared with 1990, average employment fell by 158,900 (2.0%) with full-time employment decreasing by 209,900.

#### Over 300,000 workers hold more than one job

The number of multiple jobholders has increased by nearly 80 per cent, from 185,900 in August 1979 to 331,600 in July 1991.

#### Fertility trends analysed

The average number of children ever born to women who had ever been married declined by about 6 per cent overall between 1971 and 1986 (from 2.54 to 2.39 children per woman).

16 April 1992

#### Unemployment steady at 10.5 per cent

While the unemployment rate remained steady in March 1992, the seasonally adjusted estimate of employment fell.

#### Retail trade trend improves

The seasonally adjusted estimate of turnover for retail and selected service establishments fell by 0.3 per cent in February 1992 following a large rise of 3.8 per cent in January. The trend estimate is now slightly stronger than previously estimated with an average monthly growth rate over the three months to February of 0.2 per cent.

#### Just under half of 15 to 24 year olds in education

The annual survey of participation in education showed that of the 15 to 24 year old population, 48 per cent (1,307,600) were students attending either a school or a tertiary educational institution in September 1991.

#### Australia's rural population

A new Australian Bureau of Statistics publication, *Rural Australia*, presents a detailed analysis of the 2.3 million people who lived in the rural areas of Australia at the time of the 1986 Census.

30 April 1992

#### Prices of manufacturing materials unchanged

The price index of materials used in manufacturing industries remained unchanged between January and February 1992; prices of home produced materials fell by 0.1 per cent while imported materials increased by 0.2 per cent.

#### Home lending bounces back

Seasonally adjusted housing finance commitments increased by 17.1 per cent in February 1992, more than wiping out the previous month's fall.

#### Export prices hit plateau

Significant falls in the world prices of sugar and petroleum products held Australia's export price index on a plateau in February 1992, with prices falling 0.1 per cent in the month.

#### Manufactured goods prices remain stable

The price index of articles produced by the manufacturing industry was unchanged in February 1992, maintaining an eleven-month period of only slight movement in the prices of manufactured goods as a whole.

#### New vehicle registrations gather momentum

Total new vehicle registrations increased by 9.5 per cent in March 1992 in seasonally adjusted terms, with passenger vehicles rising 9.6 per cent and 'other' vehicles by 9.3 per cent.

#### Manufacturing in March

Twenty-seven major indicators of production (twenty-five seasonally adjusted) are provided for March 1992.



## Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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### Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Robert Nixon  
Editor  
*Statistics Weekly*  
(06) 252 6104

**Statistics Weekly**  
7 May 1992

## Taxation in brief ...

Taxation revenue collected in Australia increased by 3.2 per cent to \$119,280 million during 1990-91. Taxes collected by the Commonwealth Government increased by 2.3 per cent to \$93,322 million and comprised 78.2 per cent of taxation revenue from all governments. Taxes collected by State and local governments increased 6.6 per cent to \$25,958 million and comprised 21.8 per cent of total taxation.

The total taxation collected by the Commonwealth Government during 1990-91 amounted to \$5,422 per head of mean population, a 0.8 per cent increase from the previous financial year. State and local governments collected an average of \$1,508 per head of population, an increase of 5.0 per cent.

Source: *Taxation Revenue, Australia, 1990-91* (5506.0).

## All the week's releases: 29 April to 5 May

### General

Publications Advice, 1 May 1992 (1105.0; free)  
Publications Advice, 5 May 1992 (1105.0; free)  
Statistics Weekly, 30 April 1992 (1318.0; \$4.20)  
Australian Economic Indicators, April 1992 (1350.0; \$26.00)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, NSW, April 1992 (1305.1; \$14.00)  
Economic Indicators, NSW, April 1992 (1307.1; \$5.50)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, Qld, April 1992 (1304.3; \$9.50)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, SA, April 1992 (1303.4; \$9.50)  
South Aust. at a Glance, 1992 (1306.4; \$1.00)

### Census of Population and Housing

Census 1991: First Counts National Summary (2702.0; \$20.00)  
— new issue  
Census of Population and Housing Forms, 1911 to 1991 (2911.0; \$25.00)  
— new issue  
Census 1991: First Counts for Statistical Local Areas (2701.2; \$20.00)  
— new issue

### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Balance of Payments, Aust., March 1992 (5301.0; \$16.00)  
Public Sector Superannuation Funds and Schemes, Aust., 1988-89 and 1989-90 (5511.0; \$10.00) — final issue  
Cash Management Trusts, Aust., March 1992 (5635.0; \$6.00)  
Personal Finance, Aust., February 1992 (5642.0; \$6.00)

### Labour statistics and prices

The Labour Force, Aust., March 1992 (6203.0; \$16.00)  
Superannuation, Aust., November 1991 (6319.0; \$12.00)  
Industrial Disputes, Aust., January 1992 (6321.0; \$10.00)  
Consumer Price Index, March Qtr 1992 (6401.0; \$11.50)  
Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, February 1992 (6407.0; \$10.50)  
Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, February 1992 (6408.0; \$8.00)  
Import Price Index, Aust., February 1992 (6414.0; \$8.00)  
The Labour Force, NSW, February 1992 (6201.1; \$16.00)

Continued ...



### Agriculture

Information Paper: AgStats, Aust., 1990-91 (7107.0; free)  
Livestock Products, Aust., March 1992 (7215.0; \$7.50)

### Secondary industry and distribution

Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Food, Drink, Tobacco, Stock and Poultry Food, February 1992 (8359.0; \$10.50)  
Building Approvals, Aust., March 1992 (8731.0; \$13.00)  
Construction Activity at Constant Prices, Aust., December Qtr 1991 (8782.0; \$10.50)  
Building Approvals, Vic., March 1992 (8731.2; \$10.50)  
Tourist Accommodation, Qld, December Qtr 1991 (8635.3; \$20.00)  
Building Approvals, SA, March 1992 (8731.4; \$10.50)  
Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, SA, February 1992 (8741.4; \$10.50)  
Building Approvals, NT, March 1992 (8731.7; \$7.00)

### Transport

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Vic., March 1992 (9303.2; \$10.50)  
Motor Vehicle Registrations, Qld, March 1992 (9303.3; \$10.50)  
Motor Vehicle Registrations, Tas., March 1992 (9303.6; \$5.50)

## Calendar of key releases

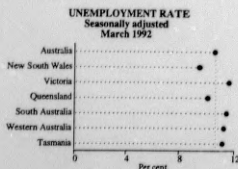
Expected releases over the fortnight to 19 May 1992

### May

- 7** The Labour Force, Australia, April 1992, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.50)  
**14** Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, March 1992 (5609.0; \$10.50)  
Retail Trade, Australia, March 1992 (8501.0; \$10.50)  
**18** Export Price Index, Australia, March 1992 (6405.0; \$8.00)

## The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to  
5 May 1992



	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Dec. qtr 91)*	-25.6	-17.7	-10.8	-3.6	1.1	-51.4	n.a.	n.a.	-17.4
Retail turnover (Feb. 92) (trend estimate)	4.5	2.2	5.3	-1.1	8.2	3.6	n.a.	9.4	4.2
New motor vehicle registrations (Mar. 92)†	11.4	32.2	29.5	1.4	28.8	10.3	36.4	-9.3	19.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Mar. 92)	32.7	51.7	31.1	-8.1	60.3	29.1	23.3	846.5	37.2
Value of total building work done (Dec. qtr 91)	-25.5	-25.4	4.4	-29.6	-12.9	3.4	4.3	3.4	-18.5
Employed persons (Mar. 92)*	0.0	-2.2	2.0	-2.7	0.3	-3.8	4.2	-1.6	-0.5
Capital city consumer price index (Mar. qtr 92)	1.2	2.1	1.7	2.6	0.9	2.1	2.1	2.6	1.7
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (Nov. 91)	4.7	4.1	3.0	5.3	4.3	3.0	4.8	4.0	4.2
Population (June 91)	1.3	1.1	2.2	1.2	2.0	0.9	1.0	2.9	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc. (Dec. qtr 91)	3.2	3.6	10.1	-2.6	8.3	3.6	2.8	2.9	5.1

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.



## Key national indicators – consolidated to 5 May 1992

		Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
<b>National production</b>						
Gross domestic product (A) — 1984-85 prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 91	n.a.	64,075	0.3	-0.5
<b>Industrial activity</b>						
New capital expenditure — current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 91	6,253	5,696	-12.6	-17.7
— 1984-85 prices			4,921	4,487	-11.4	-14.5
Expected new capital expenditure	"	Six months to June 92	11,732	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Retail turnover — current prices	"	Feb. 92	7,128	7,827	-0.3	3.9
— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 91	17,320	15,356	-0.8	1.0
New motor vehicle registrations	no.	Mar. 92	51,237	48,866	9.5	19.2
Dwelling unit approvals	"	Mar. 92	13,409	12,707	6.9	24.2
Value of all building approvals	\$m	"	1,796	1,722	-1.6	5.2
Value of total building work done — current prices	"	Dec. qtr 91	5,977.4	5,675.6	-3.6	-18.5
— 1984-85 prices	"	"	3,846.5	3,632.3	-3.9	-16.8
Manufacturers' sales — current prices	"	Dec. qtr 91	36,551	34,813	-0.9	-3.4
— 1984-85 prices	"	"	25,418	24,215	-1.0	-2.8
Expected manufacturers' sales	"	Six months to June 92	69,535	n.a.	n.a.	-3.2
<b>Labour</b>						
Employed persons (e)	'000	Mar. 92	7,704.4	7,690.8	-0.2	-0.5
Unemployment rate † (e)	%	"	11.0	10.5	-0.1	1.4
Participation rate † (e)	"	"	63.4	63.0	-0.2	-0.4
Job vacancies	'000	Feb. 92	27.6	26.6	3.1	-4.5
Average weekly overtime per employee	hours	"	1.10	1.12	5.7	-6.3
<b>Prices, profits and wages</b>						
Consumer price index	1989-90 = 100.0	Mar. qtr 92	107.6	n.a.	0.0	1.7
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0	Feb. 92	120.9	n.a.	0.0	-0.5
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0	Feb. 92	111.6	n.a.	0.0	0.3
Company profits before income tax	\$m	Sept. qtr 91	2,982	2,841	21.2	-17.9
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)	\$	Nov. 91	578.80	n.a.	2.0	4.2
<b>Interest rates (b) (monthly average)</b>						
90-day bank bills †	% per annum	Feb. 92	7.50	n.a.	-0.05	-4.15
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	10.00	n.a.	-0.10	-1.55
<b>Balance of payments</b>						
Exports of merchandise	\$m	Mar. 92	4,712	4,745	2.0	6.1
Imports of merchandise	"	"	4,349	4,317	3.3	9.9
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"	"	363	428	-9.7	-21.5
Balance of goods and services (c)	"	"	250	231	-40.6	-30.2
Balance on current account (c)	"	"	-1,022	-938	-50.1	0.6
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0	Dec. qtr 91	n.a.	97.1	-2.9	-4.5
<b>Foreign investment</b>						
Net foreign debt	\$m	31 Dec. 91	144,772	n.a.	2.7	7.6
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	194,273	n.a.	4.3	10.5
<b>Exchange rates (monthly average)</b>						
SUS	per \$A	Mar. 92	0.7588	n.a.	0.9	-1.7
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0	"	58.6	n.a.	4.3	0.7
<b>Other indicators</b>						
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million	June 91	17.3	n.a.	0.3	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals	'000	Feb. 92	238	209	1.7	17.6

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 7 May 1992.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 10).

Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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